



Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Matters

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Hurricane Damaged Watercraft



Beware of Hurricane damaged crafts

Right research can reduce the risk of purchasing potentially dangerous boats

PHOENIX - In the aftermath of hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is warning Arizona consumers about hurricane-damaged boats and jet skis in the used watercraft market.

"Thousands of boats were damaged this past hurricane season, so it is important that consumers thoroughly inspect each vehicle and its title," said Arizona's Boating Law Administrator Kevin Bergersen. "Be patient when you're buying used watercraft. Carefully checking out the watercraft can eliminate problems later."

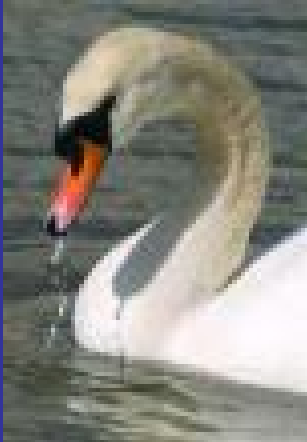
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita resulted in thousands of watercraft experiencing flood damage, and some individuals are attempting to sell them to unsuspecting buyers. The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) has compiled a database of watercraft affected by the hurricanes. The information in the database came from insurance companies, salvage yards, and state and local authorities. Additional watercraft affected by the hurricanes may not yet be included in the database. The NICB has established a Web site, nicb.org that allows buyers to check Hull Identification Numbers free of charge to help determine whether a specific watercraft may have been involved in either hurricane. Flood damage can result in severe hull damage, electrical, engine and numerous other problems that may not be immediately noticeable.

The Boat Owners Association of the United States, the nation's leading organization for recreational boaters, estimated that damage to recreational vessels as a result of Hurricane Katrina is between \$650 to \$750 million. Of that amount, only about half, or \$300 to \$400 million in damage, was covered by insurance.

Although there is no foolproof way to detect flood damage, here are a few tips for potential buyers:

- Check for mold or a musty odor.
- Any vehicle purchased from the affected area should be thoroughly inspected by a competent mechanic prior to purchase.
- Examine the interior and engine compartment for water, grit, mud, rust, stains or color fading.

Bird Flu



- Look for rust on screws in areas not typically exposed to water and watch for corrosion in the electrical system.
- Check all gauges on the dashboard to make sure they are accurate and look for signs of water damage. Turn on the ignition key to make sure all the warning lights and gauges work.

Bird Die-offs common this time of year, NOT bird flu

PHOENIX - Every year at about this time in Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department receives calls about bird die-offs in various areas of the state, mostly at urban ponds and lakes. This is a common occurrence and traditionally has absolutely nothing to do with bird flu.

"The strain of bird flu that's being highlighted in the media, which is called the Asian strain of highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza, has not been found anywhere in the entire Western Hemisphere at this point," says Mike Rabe, a migratory bird expert with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "Die-offs at this time of year are relatively common in Arizona and are usually because of trichomoniasis or avian botulism."

Trichomoniasis is caused by a tiny parasite that gets passed between birds. Doves and pigeons are especially susceptible. Trichomoniasis can cause swelling and mucous in birds' throats. It also makes birds lethargic and unusually tame. Outbreaks of this disease occur almost every year, and the parasite can be spread easily when birds congregate at bird feeders and birdbaths.

To help prevent the spread of trichomoniasis:

1. Don't put out more seed than birds can consume in a relatively short amount of time. If seed is left over, hygienic conditions can deteriorate, and healthy birds can wind up consuming seeds that have been coughed up by sick birds.
2. If you notice sick birds around your feeder, bring the feeder inside and clean it with a 10% bleach solution. You can clean a birdbath with the same type of solution.
3. If you have a trichomoniasis outbreak in your area, don't feed the birds at all and empty any birdbaths around your home.

Avian botulism is another cause of bird die-offs in the summertime. Botulism is caused by a bacteria normally found in tiny invertebrate creatures in water and mud. When the weather gets warmer and water levels drop, many of these invertebrates die. As they decay, the bacteria inside multiply and produce a toxin. Then birds eat these invertebrates and can die from the toxin. Birds with avian botulism have symptoms like

Abarca's Conservation Award



muscle paralysis, lethargy and even difficulty in holding up their necks. It is especially common to find ducks and waterfowl that have died from avian botulism at urban ponds.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services will be testing dead birds in urban areas for avian influenza this year. If you find a large number of dead birds, you can call APHIS at (602) 870-2081.

Game and Fish's Abarca receives award for conservation work in 3 nations

PHOENIX - If we want to protect our environment, then we have to protect our wetlands. That's a key message that Francisco Abarca, international and borderlands projects manager for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, is trying to send. He recently received a top award from the Environmental Law Institute and five federal agencies for his decade of work in promoting the importance of wetlands and waterfowl as international resources in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

"Close to a third of the birds that spend most of the year here in Arizona and our neighboring states spend their winters in Mexico, so this issue affects us tremendously from a management standpoint," says Abarca. "International collaborations are crucial for America's migratory species. The education and outreach program I developed helps to strengthen partnerships among scientists and managers in the United States, Mexico and Canada."

Abarca received a 2006 National Wetlands Award at an event on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., this month. The Government of Mexico also recently recognized Abarca's efforts by giving him the 2006 Wetlands Conservation Award.

Abarca has helped to produce several radio and television programs about wetlands conservation, in addition to writing newspaper articles, giving lectures, co-editing the first wetlands training manual in Spanish and organizing World Wetlands Day ceremonies. The activities bolster the mission and goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Abarca is also interested in teaching future generations of Arizonans about conservation. He launched a series of nature workshops for minority students in the Phoenix area and reached more than 200 students in the first year of the program. He has inspired young scholars from the Hispanic community to get involved, and the response has been so good that schools now compete in a drawing for the opportunity to participate.

The assistant director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Wildlife Management Division, Bruce Taubert, says, "Whether at a local

Be Bear Aware!



or international scale, Francisco has consistently demonstrated a high level of professionalism, diplomacy and passion for the conservation of wetland resources in North America."

Abarca continues to play a key role in developing relationships between environmental agencies in the United States and Mexico.

Be Bear Aware!

PHOENIX – The long-awaited prime camping season is here and the Arizona Game and Fish Department wants to remind people heading into the cool, high country to be bear aware and keep a clean campsite.

"The root cause of most conflicts between bears and people, especially in camping areas, is food. Bears can't change their behavior, but people can," says Bruce Sitko, a Game and Fish Department public information officer in the Pinetop regional office.

Prolonged drought and the subsequent decrease of food growing in the wild have Game and Fish Department biologists concerned about a possible increase in bear-human encounters this year. Bear calls are already on the rise from residents in some mountain communities.

Officials say it is prudent for all outdoor recreationists to take the following precautions to minimize potential conflicts with bears and other wildlife:

- Never intentionally feed wildlife.
- Secure all garbage.
- Keep a clean camp.
- Do not cook in your tent or sleeping area.
- Store all foods, toiletries and other scented items well away from sleeping areas and unavailable to bears.
- Wash-up, change clothing and remove all scented articles before retiring to your sleeping area.
- Walk or jog in groups. Pay attention to your surroundings when hiking, jogging or bicycling.
- Supervise your children and keep them in sight.
- Keep your pets on a leash – don't allow them to roam free. Or better yet, leave them at home if you can. Pets can easily get into conflicts with a wide range of wildlife from skunks to coyotes.

June Events

June Dates and Events

June 13, 2006

7 p.m. (MST)

Deadline Day for 2006-2007 Fall Hunts in Arizona

Tuesday, June 13, 2006 is the deadline to submit an application to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for fall 2006-2007 hunts. Click [here](#) for additional information.

June 30 and July 1 & 2

7:30 a.m.

Sunrise 3-D Shoot-Out

Pee-Wee to adult classes, non-competitive Shoot for Fun. Money and competitive shoots. Sunrise Park Resort, Greer, AZ. 800-772-7669. www.sunriseskipark.com



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Department Staff have contributed to this publication in the form of articles and photographs.

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AZGFD Legislative Affairs Division